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A NEW PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE

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The Ely Palace Portrait.

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The Ely Palace Portrait.

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A NEW PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE

*The Case of the Ely Palace Painting
as against that of the so-called
Droeshout Original.*

BY

JOHN CORBIN

Author of "An American at Oxford"

+

"O sweet Mr. Shakspeare! I'll have his picture in my study"

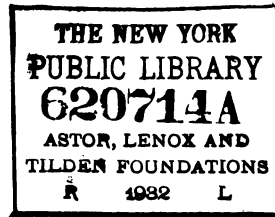
The Returne from Parnassus, Circ. 1599

L.C.

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON & NEW YORK MDCCCCIII

GS

NEW YORK



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P. C.

PREFATORY

MANY portraits of Shakespeare have been regarded by their partisans as taken from life ; but none of them has been accepted as unquestionably genuine. Of late a painting, recently discovered—the so-called Droeshout Original—has been looked upon by the highest authorities as, in all probability, a life portrait, and has been reproduced as of chief interest in biographies of the great dramatist. As yet this painting has not been described adequately, nor indeed in any but the most superficial manner. At the same time another painting—the Ely Palace portrait—which, in certain points at least, is admitted to be of even greater interest, has been even more strangely neglected. The purpose of the present essay is to relate the history of these paintings as far as it is known, and to discuss their respective claims to be regarded as genuine. The aim of the discussion will be to show that the so-called Droeshout Original is probably a fabrication, and that the Ely Palace painting is probably a life portrait of Shakespeare.

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THE ELY PALACE PORTRAIT. *Photogravure Frontispiece.*

THE DROESHOUT PRINT, PREFIXED TO
THE FOLIO OF 1623 *To face page 22*

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A NEW PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE

WHEN the Ely Palace portrait of Shakespeare was discovered in 1846 no notice was taken of it, except to record some meagre and quite unscientific details of the discovery in an architectural miscellany—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, to bury them there—and for half a century no further notice was taken of it, beyond the announcement of its transfer from hand to hand. During thirty-two years out of the fifty years of its neglect, it hung—of all places—in the house in which Shakespeare was born. Until the thirty-second of these years, I suppose, any one of the hundreds of thousands of people who saw it might have obtained permission to reproduce and publish it. As it happened, it was in the unpropitious year that I crossed the Atlantic with this end in view.

One of the leading authorities at Stratford-upon-Avon had lately negotiated the purchase of a portrait of Shakespeare which was supposed to be the original of the famous

I.—The
Ely Palace
Portrait
and the
Droeshout
Original.

A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

engraving by Martin Droeshout, prefixed to the first folio of the collected works; and no sooner had this supposed original been incorporated in the collection of the Memorial Building at Stratford than its authenticity was called in dispute by prominent critics. This so-called Droeshout original became the subject of an intricate and difficult controversy. The evidence then at hand, while it seemed far from sufficient to discredit the portrait, seemed quite as far from sufficient to establish it as genuine; and to this day those of its partisans who have written with most authority have not been able to pronounce unreservedly in its favour. How the Ely Palace portrait was concerned in this controversy I shall not attempt to explain. The fact of the matter is that I gained permission to have it engraved only on condition that I should have the supposed Droeshout original likewise engraved. Furthermore, while I was to abstain in my article from a decision with regard to the supposed original—as I felt bound to do, because of the inconclusiveness of the evidence then at hand—I was to permit the librarian in whose custody it was to contribute an account of it to the article. The consequence of all this was very different from what might have been expected. In spite of the diversity of existing

The Ely Palace Portrait.

opinion on the subject, the librarian's account* contained an explicit verdict in favour of the so-called Droeshout original: "There is now no doubt that it is a life portrait of Shakespeare, painted in 1609." Any such positive statement as to the Ely Palace portrait I felt to be unwarranted. Thus an article that had been undertaken as a plea for one portrait was converted, by the ironic power of circumstance, into a partisan assertion of the claim of its rival.

Yet the main end in view was accomplished. When the unmistakable merits of the Ely Palace portrait became known, they secured it a place among the few representations of Shakespeare that deserve the serious consideration of the student. It would not be necessary to revive so vexing a controversy, except for the fact that evidence has developed which throws new light on the difficult points at issue. Unfortunately this new evidence can only be made clear by reviewing the entire discussion.

* *Harper's Magazine*, May, 1897.

A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

II.—Con-
cerning
Mock
Originals.

THAT a portrait of Shakespeare should have been neglected for over half a century is not necessarily a source of wonder. For many decades the Director of the National Portrait Gallery was asked, on an average of rather more than once a year,* to buy a presentment of the great dramatist—a counterfeit presentment—usually at an exorbitant price; and to this day, the Director informs me, the supply continues. The origin of these portraits is easily accounted for. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, as is well known, the national interest in Shakespeare became feverish, and broke out in forgeries, of which those of the notorious Ireland are the most memorable. One of the plague-sores of this unwholesome time was the manufacture of portraits of Shakespeare—"mock originals," as their fabricators called them—which bade fair to become one of the permanent products of England. Literally dozens of them are

* See a paper read by Lionel Cust, Esq., Director of the National Portrait Gallery, reported in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries in December, 1895, page 1.

Concerning Mock Originals.

known to have been circulated. In the case of one Zincke and one Holder, the method of manufacture was laid bare.* Any old painting from a junk-shop—an antique dancing-master, an elderly lady in cap and blue ribbons, a Dutch admiral—was bought for a few shillings, and deftly furnished forth with a set of new features, ostensibly those of the great poet. These were, of course, painted over the original portrait in a manner more or less archaic, and artfully blackened with smoke, so as to seem a part of the original painting. Wivell† has a curious passage with regard to the smoking of a mock original. He had seen it when it was fresh from Zincke's brush. "It was then quite finished, as far as regards the painting, and only wanted that which is necessary for the curing of hams before it would hit the taste of a customer; according to the account given of it by the dealer it actually had been so done, it having [after the smoking, and before Wivell's second view of it] undergone a complete salivation in the cleansing of it by himself. Whenever I think of Mr. Zincke discolouring his portraits to

* See the works on Shakespeare's portraits by James Boaden (1824) and by Abraham Wivell (1827).

† Page 26 of the supplement of his volume.

A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

give them the appearance of age, it greatly reminds me of Hogarth's print of Old Time smoking of pictures, in which is represented the sage gentleman with a bald head giving vent to the suction of the smoke from a pipe which he is puffing on a picture." Very often a story was concocted connecting the "original" with Shakespeare's family, and pasted on the back in pseudo-Elizabethan script. Life portraits thus manufactured sold to the delighted connoisseur for prices ranging from three to six pounds—the smallness of which, no doubt, contributed to the purchaser's delight, as well as to his belief in the keenness of his connoisseurship.

The most amusing circumstance with regard to these mock originals, and at the same time the circumstance most pertinent to the present discussion, is that as soon as a connoisseur bought one of them he fell hopelessly beneath its spell. Both Zincke and Holder, when suffering from lapses into honesty, found the utmost difficulty in convincing the purchaser that there was a shadow of doubt as to the authenticity of an "original"—such is the magic of the worship of Shakespeare when joined with the pride of connoisseurship. The old lady became the property of the French actor Talma, who enshrined it in a costly

Concerning Mock Originals.

frame and displayed it to his admiring friends. Charles Lamb, it is said—and one scarcely knows whether to laugh or to weep—fell down on his knees and kissed it. The story of the Dutch admiral, which is preserved in a written confession of the forger, is pure farce. Having picked the portrait up for five shillings, Holder repainted it, and sold it to a print-seller named Dunford for four pounds ten shillings. Dunford, waxing enthusiastic over his find, induced literally hundreds of “connoisseurs” to inspect it, and they all seem to have acknowledged its great value. Holder shrewdly counselled Dunford “not to refuse a good offer for it if it came.” Dunford, as Holder relates, “answered sharply, ‘What, sir, do you mean to say it is painted by yourself?’ To which I made no reply. He again made answer, ‘I [Holder] did not know more about it than Mr. West or Sir T. Lawrence and four hundred competent judges;’ but himself [Dunford] could not be deceived.” In one sense, certainly, Dunford was not deceived, for he sold the admiral Shakespeare for one hundred guineas. When the portrait was exposed as a fraud, Sir Thomas Lawrence is said to have denied that he had vouched for its authenticity; but it is evident that neither he nor Benjamin West discovered the imposture when they examined the portrait—a fact that

A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

throws some little light on the value of the critical opinion of celebrated painters, even when they are presidents of the Royal Academy. In his confession Holder laughs somewhat more than in his sleeve, and remarks that the crowd of connoisseurs were "blind altogether."*

This pair of forgers seem to have been guileless knaves, with a powerful conviction that under certain circumstances it is not only right but necessary to make mock originals. Zincke bursts into gratitude to Shakespeare for having provided him with "the morsel and the crust which preserved him from houseless exposure." Holder engagingly pleads: "My object has always been to sell my pictures cheap. I have a wife and nine children to support, and had I the advantages which others have made by my works, I should not now be the poor man I am." Perhaps no other virtue could so inspire a man to the enterprise of making Shakespeares as a wife and nine children. And in addition to these accomplishments, Holder had an admirable craftsman's pride in his art. The Dutch admiral Shakespeare he seems to have regarded as a poor thing, though his own; but he records with

* Wivell, pp. 182-183. A briefer account is in J. Parker Norris's "Portraits of Shakespeare," pp. 218 *et seq.*

Concerning Mock Originals.

pride: "I afterwards made another Shakespeare worth a score such as the above." The fate of this worthy Shakespeare is, unhappily, not recorded. The known dozens of mock originals cast a gloom over the prospect of any portrait subsequently brought to light; but this mock original has a separate claim upon the imagination. The more one is convinced that any particular portrait is an original, and no mock, the greater the lurking terror of Holder's "other Shakespeare"; and in view of it—or in the lack of a view of it—we shall not be justified in pursuing any but the most cautious and scientific mode of investigation.

A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

III.—The Likelihood of a Life Portrait.

THE obvious test of a newly discovered portrait is its history, or, in the cant term, its pedigree. Without a pedigree the great collector of Shakespearian relics, J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, would not look at any article ; and one noted living scholar, Dr. F. J. Furnivall, refuses to consider any portrait that cannot be traced to Shakespeare's family or intimate friends. Admirable as is the spirit of this scepticism, it is, perhaps, possible to push it to extremes. Those who fabricate portraits find little to trouble them in fabricating pedigrees : do we not learn, and from none other than the worthy Slender, of ancestors that come after us ? Portentous documents have been adduced in evidence as to this and that portrait, but up to the present not one of them has shouldered the burden of proof. In point of fact, with the exception of the crude engraving prefixed to the folios, and the cruder bust over Shakespeare's tomb at Stratford, only one portrait—the Chandos—has a history that reaches back into the early seventeenth century ; and the origin of even this is lost in the shadowiest kind of tradition. What is perhaps more to be

The Likelihood of a Life Portrait.

regretted, the portrait has suffered so severely from decay and from injudicious restoration as to have lost value as evidence. It is quite clear that, if we hope to add to the evidence of the engraving and the bust, we must abate somewhat the requirement as to "pedigree."

Such an abatement is clearly warrantable, for there is considerable evidence that portraits of Shakespeare existed. The artist whose name is attached to the folio engraving, Martin Droeshout, could scarcely have worked from the life. He appears to have been the son of one Michael Droeshout by his first wife, Susannaken van der Ersbek, and, according to the register of the Dutch Church in London, was baptised on April 26, 1601.* When Shakespeare died, accordingly, in 1616, Martin Droeshout was only about fifteen years old. There is no reason to suppose, furthermore, that the engraving was made until the folio was projected, some six or seven years after Shakespeare's death. The conjecture that Droeshout worked from mere verbal tradition is not supported by any evidence; it is antecedently very improbable, and is directly opposed by Ben Jonson's well-known verses† commending the

* Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries, December, 1895

† For a fuller discussion of these points see beyond, p. 19.

A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

engraving. It is thus permissible to assume that Droeshout drew his engraving from some extant portrait.

As to the extent to which Shakespeare's portraits were circulated, there is interesting evidence in the first part of *The Returne from Parnassus*, a curious and very pointed drama in literary criticism,* written and played at St. John's College, Cambridge, at the close of the sixteenth century. A certain Gullio, after quoting from the opening stanza of *Venus and Adonis*, exclaims,† "O sweet Mr. Shakespeare! I'll have his picture in my study at the Courte." This passage Mr. John Malone, the American actor and Shakespearian scholar, kindly pointed out to me as evidence of the currency of Shakespeare's portrait during his lifetime; and when I showed it to Mr. Sidney Colvin, Keeper of the Prints in the British Museum, he remarked that it would almost indicate the currency of prints of Shakespeare. It should, perhaps, be noticed, by way of caution, that Gullio is a very good example of the Anglicised *Miles Gloriosus*, and that his pretence of being a courtier is mere vapouring. But this fact scarcely affects the validity of the

* Edited by the Rev. W. D. Macray, Oxford, 1886.

† Act 3, scene i., p. 58.

The Likelihood of a Life Portrait.

allusion in question. The scene in which it occurs—as, in fact, the entire play—is full of point and pertinence; it is bristling with allusions to known contemporary customs, and with evidence of a close personal knowledge of literary London. St. John's College was perhaps the most famous of all the colleges of the day for its connection with the world of letters, and it numbered amongst its graduates some of Shakespeare's intimate acquaintances, notably the Earl of Southampton. Nor is it strange that this is the only contemporary allusion to Shakespeare's portrait. If the circumstance we are seeking to establish were a matter of wide popular interest, we might reasonably require the evidence of more than a solitary reference; but it is not. It is a minor personal detail with regard to a man of whom amazingly few facts were thought worthy of record. The only cause for surprise is that one indubitable reference to Shakespeare's portrait should have survived the wreckage of time. The passage indicates that a gentleman of Elizabeth's Court was likely to adorn his study with a portrait of his favourite poet. The Earl of Southampton, whose generosity founded Shakespeare's fortunes, was much given* to

* See Lee's "Life of Shakespeare."

A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

having his own portrait painted, and would have been especially likely to appreciate the portrait of the friend in whose verses he delighted. And if, as many suppose, the patron to whom Shakespeare addressed the first series of sonnets was another than Southampton, he also might be expected to have preserved a portrait. And there is no reason why we should stop here; for though our list of Shakespeare's friends is brief, we have abundant evidence that he was not only one of the most popular of the poets of his time, but that as a man he was one of the best beloved. Three or four contemporary portraits would not necessarily tax our credulity. A close scrutiny of any supposedly contemporary portraits of Shakespeare is accordingly justified, even in the lack of a pedigree that carries us beyond the terrible shadow of Holder and Zincke. It is only necessary to make sure that our inquiry never neglects for a moment the rigid canons of evidence.

In judging a portrait without history two tests are indispensable. It must resemble one or both of the two portraits of Shakespeare which we know to have been approved by his contemporaries—the Droeshout engraving and the bust at Stratford—and it must be demonstrably painted in the manner in vogue during

The Likelihood of a Life Portrait.

Shakespeare's life. Both these considerations are fraught with difficulty. The two authentic portraits obviously represent Shakespeare at widely different periods; they are both rude in technique, and have been impaired by accident or clumsy alteration. As for dating a portrait from internal evidence, the opinions of specialists are notoriously apt to increase doubt rather than to remove it. Yet, intricate and baffling as both considerations must prove, they are the only possible means of forming an opinion. As the engraving and the bust are the only clearly authentic portraits of Shakespeare, it has been thought best, in the following account of them, to err on the side of fulness rather than on that of brevity. Several of the details, moreover, that appear trivial, will be found to be of considerable moment.

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**IV.—The
Droeshout
Engraving
and the
Stratford
Bust.**

THE best authenticated portrait is the engraving by Martin Droeshout, which was prefixed to the first folio, published in 1623—seven years after Shakespeare's death. Droeshout was a minor engraver, whose works are valuable to the collector chiefly on account of their rarity; and unfortunately the engraving of Shakespeare is below the average of even Droeshout's performances. On the page opposite the engraving are the following lines by Ben Jonson:—

This Figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Graver had a strife
with Nature, to out-doo the life:
O, could he but have drawne his wit
As well in 'brasse, as he hath hit
His face, the Print would then surpasse
All, that was ever writ in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.

B. I.

These lines have usually been taken as high praise of the engraving; and, in view of its roughness and lack of all life-likeness, they have been sometimes regarded as perfunctory

The Droeshout Engraving.

and insincere. One commentator remarks that it is fortunate "these metrical commendations are not required to be delivered upon oath." To judge of them rightly, however, it is necessary to consider closely the circumstances under which they were written, and the precise meaning of the phrases used. Commendatory verses were one of the established conventions of the time, and the very fact that they were a matter of convention caused them to have a conventional language. The phrasing of the second couplet, which seems to us fulsome and far-fetched in its compliment, was hackneyed enough in the time of Elizabeth. In *Venus and Adonis*, for instance (1593), we find—

Nature that made thee, with herself at strife,
Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.

And again—

Look when a painter would surpass the life . . .
His art with Nature's workmanship at strife.

Such examples could be multiplied. Far from being fulsome of praise, the couplet is no more than a conventional metrical statement of the fact that the engraver did what he could in a difficult undertaking. If Jonson had meant to praise the engraving, he would have expressed himself quite differently. When Sir Godfrey

A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

Kneller made a copy of the Chandos portrait* and presented it to Dryden, Dryden acknowledged the gift in a poem of praise which we might, if we wished, call fulsome. It will suffice to quote two lines—

Such are thy pieces, imitating life
So near they *almost conquer* in the strife.

The rest of Jonson's poem, reduced to simple parlance, is similarly lacking in exaggeration. It says that the graver has failed to express Shakespeare's mind as well as he has drawn his features, and advises the reader, if he wants to find the real Shakespeare, to turn to the plays. Surely this is not the least of Ben Jonson's triumphs in commendatory epigram. While glozing over the delicate question of the artistic skill of the portrait, as he was bound to do in deference to his friends and comrades, Heminge and Condell, the publishers of the folio, he has paid the highest tribute to his friend and comrade the dead poet.

Evasive as is Jonson's eulogy, it makes none the less evident the fact that the features of the engraving must have possessed a fundamental likeness to the features of Shakespeare. The folio was addressed to those who had

* Somewhere between 1683 and 1692.—Boaden, pp. 32-40.

The Droeshout Engraving.

known the plays on the London stage, and who remembered Shakespeare as an actor in them. A portrait drawn from memory, or from the description of Shakespeare's old associates, could scarcely have failed to shock the purchasers of the folio, instead of pleasing them. Whatever we may think of the success of Martin Droeshout's "strife," it is clearly necessary to assume that the print was drawn from a portrait, and that it did not violently misrepresent it. Defects it obviously has, both as a drawing and as an interpretation of a human face—to say nothing of the face of so great a poet ; but it is probable that the defects have been exaggerated. Anyone familiar with prints of the period will open his mind to many agreeable impressions. Boaden remarks : "To me this portrait exhibits an aspect of calm benevolence and tender thought ; great comprehension, and a kind of mixt feeling, as when melancholy yields to the suggestions of fancy. Such, I well remember, it appeared also to Mr. Kemble, when, some years since, we examined this subject together." Æsthetic appreciations of this kind are of interest as helping to define the character and value of the portrait, but they are too much a matter of personal, and even of momentary feeling, to build upon in argument. Yet the definite and measurable form and

A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

proportion of the features of the engraving offer a very considerable basis of fact, and will be of the utmost value in judging of the Ely Palace portrait.

The costume of the Droeshout engraving seems even less correctly rendered than the features ; yet it also embodies facts, and in the present discussion several of these facts will prove to be of the most far-reaching importance. The jerkin belongs in general to a type common at the opening of the seventeenth century. The distinguishing features of this type are the row of small buttons down the front, the straps of embroidery that mark the main outlines, and the so-called wings that surround the arms at their juncture with the body, giving breadth and emphasis to the shoulders. As regards one feature of the jerkin, however, no parallel can be found in the ample records of Elizabethan dress.* One side appears to have a diagonal from the shoulder to the waist, while the other side has none. This lack of symmetry, it may be conjectured, is a result of faulty perspective. The conjecture is borne out by the presence of

* See the works on historic costume by Joseph Strutt, Fairholt, Planché, Hill ; and also costumes of the period in the National Portrait Gallery and other collections.

The Droeshout Engraving.

defects in drawing that are obvious. Thus the body seems too small for the head, giving the impression of a preternaturally thin chest and narrow shoulders. The right side of the body, too, judging from the line of the top of the shoulder, and from the diagonal, is apparently drawn as in full front, while the left side, as is seen in the circle about the arm, is in three-quarter view. The right arm, moreover, is preposterously thick, and the left arm joins the shoulder most impossibly. Even in the row of buttons the defective drawing is evident ; for while its direction indicates that it is viewed from the side, it lacks the slight outward curve which is needed to indicate the normal modelling, the result being that the chest appears not only narrow, but flat. If it be found that a painted portrait, from which the engraving might have been copied, corrects these defects, the fact will indicate that the painting was drawn from life ; while, if it repeats them, the inference is equally strong that it was copied from the engraving.

The bust of Shakespeare is on his monument in the chancel in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon. According to Dugdale's diary (1653), "Shakespeare's and John Combe's monuments at Stratford super Avon were made by Gerard Johnson." This Johnson was a Dutch

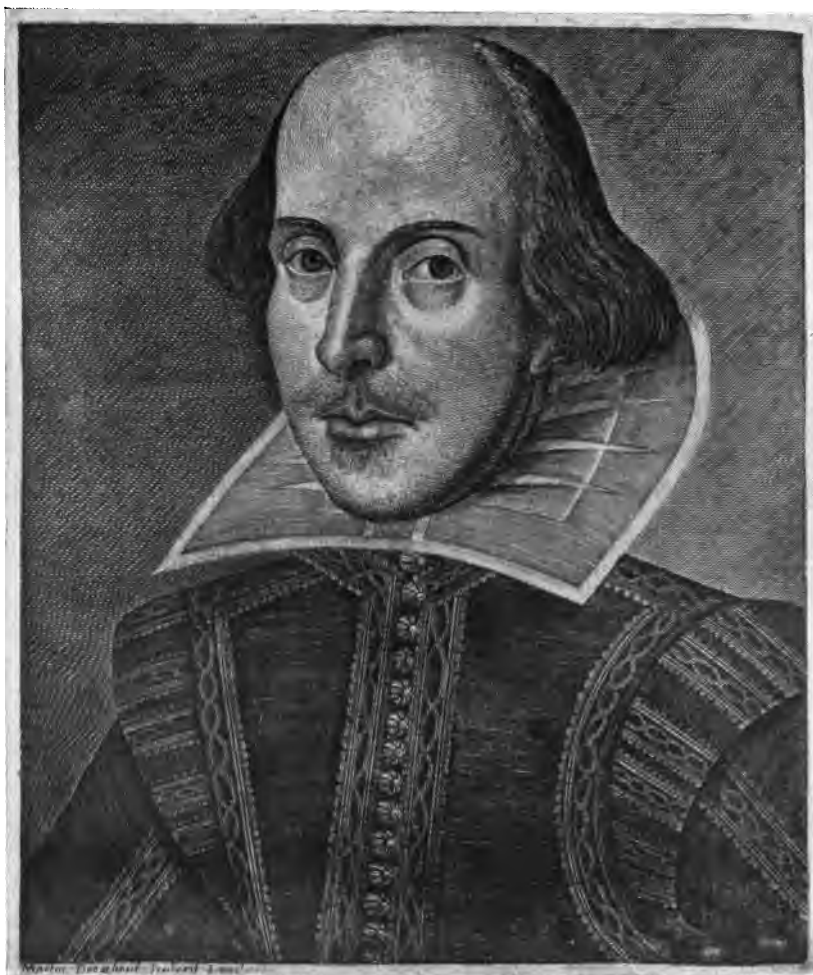
A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

sculptor, or "tombe-maker," who practised his trade in London. The first extant reference to the bust is in a commendatory poem by L. Digges in the first folio—

. . . . thy Workes, by which, out-live
Thy Tombe, thy name must when that stone is rent,
And Time dissolves thy Stratford monument.

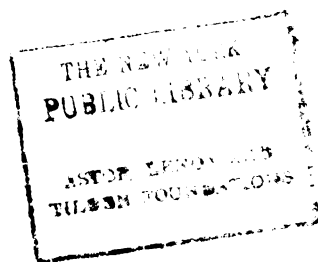
It is thus certain that the monument was in existence in 1623; and if, as has been conjectured, Gerard Johnson did his monuments to Shakespeare and John Combe at the same time, a somewhat earlier date is certain. In any case the bust was put up during the life of Shakespeare's wife and daughters, and was familiar to his Stratford friends. Its authority is therefore less than that of the engraving only in so far as the approval of Shakespeare's family is tacit, whereas Jonson's approval is express; though it must be added that time and circumstance seem to have treated it more harshly than the engraving.

In its original state, the bust, like most sculptures at that time, and indeed like the best Greek sculptures, was coloured to the life. In 1749 the colours were renewed, "care being taken to preserve the exact tints." In 1793 Edmund Malone, whose pseudo-classical tastes were offended by the colours, succeeded in having



THE DROESHOUT PRINT, PREFIXED TO THE FOLIO OF 1623.

(Reproduced by photograph from a copy in the Lenox Library, New York.)



The Droeshout Engraving.

the bust painted white. In 1861 Simon Collins, a restorer of pictures, was engaged to put the colours on again. On removing the white paint, "he found that enough of the ancient pigment remained to enable him to restore the original tints." According to the records of Collins's restoration, the colour of the hair, moustache, and lip-beard was auburn, and of the eyes light hazel;* and so Britton reports of them in 1816.† This evidence has usually been taken to be conclusive as to the colour of Shakespeare's features. As for the eyes, however, it would not be at all strange if the exact tint failed to survive the restoration of 1749, Malone's white-washing of 1793, and—especially considering the smallness of their surface—Collins's scraping and repainting of 1861. It is well known, moreover, that pigments may alter colour radically with time and exposure to light. An instance of this, some time since, came to my knowledge. In a youthful miniature of an old lady who had just died, the hair was altered from red to auburn, and the eyes from light blue to hazel. The claim of the colour of the bust as a whole to stand as scientific evidence, though considerable, is accordingly not absolute,

* Parker Norris, p. 25.

† Quoted by Friswell, p. 6.

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and is least absolute in the case of the eyes. I may add, in connection with this, that at present, according to a careful observation made for me by the Vicar of Holy Trinity, the hair and moustache lack the reddish cast of auburn, being dark brown, while the lip beard is nearly black and is tinged with grey.

Johnson's model in making the bust is generally supposed to have been a death-mask, and there seems to be no antecedent improbability in the assumption.* Had he been a first-rate artist, even for that archaic period of the plastic arts in England, the bust would be of supreme authority. Unfortunately, he seems scarcely to have deserved his very modest title of "tombe-maker." The face of the bust is even cruder in modelling, if possible, than that of the print is in draughtsmanship. The whole left cheek is somewhat smaller than the right. A slight difference in this respect is not unusual in life, and has been utilised in sculpture to give character to the face, as, for example, in the Venus of Milo and the Phidian Theseus; but the difference in the bust is so considerable as to suggest that the flying mould of wax from which the death-mask must have been modelled was distorted in cooling. The eyes, which in

* Friswell and Parker Norris.

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the mask were of course closed, are small, and are very stiffly rendered. The mouth, which is open, is represented with about the same skill, or lack of skill, as the eyes. The parted lips reveal, on close scrutiny, an inner ridge that was clearly intended to represent the tips of the upper teeth. This is now painted flesh colour, so that it vanishes from all but the nearest and most attentive scrutiny—a fact that explains why it has not yet been noted by those who have written about the bust. Crude as the bust is, it is to be regarded as the presentment of the Shakespeare who in 1616 was familiar to Stratford-upon-Avon.

As to the expression of the bust, there has been as wide a difference of opinion as to that of the engraving. Friswell found it "heavy, without any feeling; a mere block." Boaden is as fortunate here as in the case of the engraving: he finds the bust jovial, even convivial. This difference of interpretation is in all probability to be largely attributed to want of harmony in the artist's execution. The eyes can scarcely be called intelligent, and the unskilful modelling of the features results in an undoubted heaviness; but the main cast of the countenance—the ample cheeks and the broad, high forehead—is of the kind one instinctively associates with a serene,

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intelligent, and abundantly human spirit. As to the engraving, Boaden's agreeable sensations stand on their own legs; but his interpretation of the bust is confirmed by the sculptor, who has, luckily, told us quite obviously what he could not tell us with subtlety. One of the poet's hands holds a pen and the other rests on a sheet of paper, while the lips are parted, as if under the spell of some strong sensation of delight. In the original state of the bust the teeth in all probability showed a flash of white. It is clearly intended to represent Shakespeare in the inspiration of composition and under the spell of the comic muse.*

Comparing the engraving and the bust, we find both marked resemblances and marked points of difference. Minor discrepancies may be disregarded as incident upon the very crude workmanship in both; but two points—the greater fulness of the cheeks of the bust and the comparative brevity of the nose—are so

* In James Boaden's book on the portraits, a drawing of the bust by John Boaden faintly indicates the ridge within the upper lip. It does not represent the teeth individually. The general cast of the countenance is considerably more animated and jovial than in the bust, especially as regards the curves of the lips. It is possible that James Boaden's highly pleasant impressions were derived from this drawing rather than from the bust.



MASK, TAKEN FROM THE STRATFORD BUST.

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The Droeshout Engraving.

serious as to impair the validity of the evidence of both portraits as to Shakespeare's features, unless they can be explained.

The fulness of the cheeks of the bust need cause no difficulty, if we assume—what is most probable—that the print was taken from a portrait of a much earlier date. That such portraits of the poet as remained in London represented him in the height of his activity and fame is altogether likely ; and the busy playwright and manager of the Bankside would naturally be less given to superfluous tissue than the comfortable retired gentleman of Stratford. Moreover, even in the print the line above the band is suggestive of increasing flesh. The fulness of the cheeks is thus not only explainable, but may be regarded as circumstantial evidence of the accuracy of the bust.

The nose of the bust is not so easily disposed of, but a plausible explanation has been found. It will be noticed that just as the nose is shorter than that in the engraving, the upper lip is longer. This has given rise to the conjecture* that the difference is the result of a grievous accident. Might not the tip of the nose have been chipped in the carving, and

* See Parker Norris.

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the present apology for a nose fashioned out of what stone remained? So violent an hypothesis requires substantiation. It has been observed that there was still a roughness on the lip just below the nose; and this, it is conjectured, marks the place from which it was intended that the cartilage (septum) should spring. This cartilage, moreover, instead of issuing perpendicular to the lip, or 'inclining downward, as it does in the normal face, rises slightly to the tip of the nose. If it issued perpendicularly, the upper lip would be still longer in proportion. Careful scrutiny has failed to detect the roughness on the lip; but it is not impossible that repeated scrapings and paintings have obliterated it. The slight rise in the direction of the cartilage is easily seen. The nostrils (alæ) are also drawn upward towards the cheeks in a somewhat unusual manner. The right nostril of the bust I found even higher than the left, which possibly indicates that the fracture was more extensive on the right side. On each side of the tip of the nose is a shallow cavity, perhaps resulting from a deficiency of stone. A more convincing bit of evidence is in the position of the moustache. In the normal face the hair begins at the base of the nose, often in the very nostrils, and this is notably the case in the Droeshout engraving.

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In the bust there is a wide and very ugly interval. It is notable, also, that whereas the two portraits differ as to the relative lengths of nose and lip, they agree as to the combined length of the two features. Any of these particulars, in itself, would not be of great importance, but cumulatively they amount to a virtual demonstration. It seems strange, no doubt, according to modern ideas, that Shakespeare's family should have accepted so imperfect a likeness; but here, as elsewhere, modern ideas are perhaps misleading. In days when the stone for the monument had probably to be carted the hundred and more miles from London, a fraction of an inch might not have been so grave a consideration even on a poet's nose.

Further colour is lent to this ingenious conjecture by the points of resemblance between the other features of the engraving and the bust. Owing to the crudeness of both, and the difference in the periods of life they represent, the resemblances are of necessity mainly confined to the rougher masses of the face; but they are none the less striking. In both portraits the general contour is, as has been pointed out, full and sensuous; the cheek-bones are in both moderately prominent; the eyebrows meet the nose at an angle which, while far from

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uncommon, is decidedly characteristic ; the forehead in both is high and well domed ; and the head is bald to the very top, the baldness being quite naturally more extensive in the bust than in the engraving ; while over the ears the hair falls in abundance. The moustache of both portraits is small and upturned.

Rough and general as are these points of resemblance, and unsatisfactory to all who wish to judge precisely what spirit Shakespeare's features expressed in life, for the purpose of the present discussion they are of the utmost value. Our perception of the finer shades of character expressed in a portrait depends on the infinitely elusive play of facial muscles, and is, moreover, subject to the personal equations both of the artist who represents and of the critic who interprets. But the general distribution of masses is a matter of scientific fact evident to every seeing eye. During a certain period of his London life, Shakespeare may or may not have given evidence of grave thought and a melancholy fancy, and in his later years, at Stratford, he may or may not have been benevolent and serene ; but at both periods the bones underlying the face would have had the same proportions to one another. The fact that in these two portraits they do have the

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same proportions is conclusive evidence as to the general massing of Shakespeare's features. Even in the matter of æsthetic interpretation this has a striking significance ; for it constitutes the bed-rock expression, and clearly fixes the type to which the face belonged.

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V.—The Ely Palace Painting.

THE history of the Ely Palace portrait is brief. In the miscellaneous column of an architectural weekly (*The Builder*)* occurred the following brief notice, entitled "Portrait of Shakespeare":

A picture, which is believed by some, well qualified to judge, to be a contemporary portrait of the great bard, has come into the possession of the excellent Bishop of Ely. It was found in an obscure broker's shop, where nothing could be learnt of its previous history. It has no name on it, but cleaning has made apparent in one part, "Aet. 39, 1603," which agrees with the age of Shakespeare in that year. We have not yet seen the picture, and cannot at once, after so many disappointments, give implicit credence to the statement; what we know, however, of those who have examined the portrait, and of the judgment of the Rt. Rev. Bishop himself, induces us to believe it will be found correct, and that a great discovery has been made.

Five weeks later, on December 26, 1846, this paragraph was added, entitled "The Bishop of Ely's Shakespeare Portrait":—

The paragraph which appeared in our pages relative to a picture in the possession of the Bishop of Ely, supposed to be a portrait of Shakespeare, excited considerable interest, and was reprinted by the majority of our contemporaries. We have since seen the picture, and are prepossessed in favour of its genuineness. It is without the beard, closely

* November 21, 1846, vol. iv., p. 556.

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resembling the engraving in the folio edition, to which were appended Ben Jonson's well-known lines. The painting is on a panel, 1 ft. 8 in. by 1 ft. 3½ in., and when found was in an old ebony frame, covered with dirt, and disregarded. It was bought for a few shillings, solely on the ground of its likeness to Shakespeare. The date and age (1603, aet. 39), serving to confirm this impression, were not discovered till afterwards : these are in the left-hand corner of the picture, at the top, in the same position as they are in the portrait of [by] Cornelius Jansen, dated 1610.

The Bishop of Ely referred to was the Right Rev. Thomas Turton. After his death his collection was sold in the auction rooms of Messrs. Christie, Manson and Wood, of London, April 14, 1864. Mr. Henry Graves, the publisher and print-seller, bought the portrait of Shakespeare, and immediately presented it to the collection in Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford, of which he was a trustee and guardian. For years the portrait hung in a peak of one of the upper chambers, and was, besides, so covered with dust as to be almost invisible. In May, 1891, Mr. Richard Savage, secretary and librarian to the trustees and guardians, realising its rare interest and value, dusted it, and hung it on the eye-line. In 1897 he put on record such information with regard to it as he had gathered : *

* *Harper's Magazine*, May, 1897.

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“Mr. Graves knew of the portrait while the Bishop was living, and had such a high opinion of it that on the prelate’s demise he promptly secured it.* The Bishop, it is said, valued the portrait more than any other picture he had in his possession, and once told Mr. Graves either that he had refused a thousand guineas for it, or that he would not take that sum if offered. It is stated in *The Builder* that nothing of its previous history could be learnt at the time of its purchase by the Bishop, but subsequent inquiries appear to have elicited the following, which was orally communicated to the writer more than once by the late Mr. Graves (the last time being but a few months before his death): that the broker obtained it from the sale of the effects of the last of a very old London family, which had resided in Little Britain from before Shakespeare’s time; that Shakespeare knew and visited the family, and gave them this portrait. Mr. Graves fully believed that it was a life portrait of the poet, and that, though bearing a somewhat younger expression, it might possibly have been the original of the Droeshout engraving. . . . The portrait has been somewhat described by the

* The catalogue of pictures in the Shakespeare Memorial at Stratford, p. 83, states that the price was 100 guineas.

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foregoing extracts from *The Builder*, but it may be further remarked that it is painted in oil colours upon an oak panel, enclosed in the old ebony frame before mentioned, and, as will be seen from the above first engraving of it, has 'Æ 39. x 1603.' in black letters at the top left-hand corner, which would read (Anno) Ætatis 39, Christi 1603. . . . The following inscription is painted in black letters upon a white paper on the back of the portrait panel :

"This portrait of William Shakespeare, called 'The Ely Palace Portrait,' was presented to the Trustees of the House in which the great poet was born, on April 23, 1864 (the Tercentenary Anniversary), by Mr. Henry Graves, Publisher to Queen Victoria, 6, Pall Mall, London.

"It will therefore be seen that the picture has been on exhibition at the birthplace for over thirty-two years, during which time no especial notice of it was published." *

The history of the portrait, it will have been observed, is mainly hearsay, or reported at second hand ; and as such it must, according to the laws of evidence, be ruled out of court. Even as hearsay it is markedly deficient. We are not told, for example, whether the Bishop of Ely bought the portrait "for a few

* In December, 1901, Mr. Savage revised his notes of 1897, making a few immaterial changes.

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shillings" directly from the shop of the "obscure broker," or whether he paid a larger price to an intermediary. If he were the discoverer and first purchaser, it would be a point distinctly in its favour. In 1901 Mr. Savage told me that he had always understood this to be the case, and seemed surprised, in re-reading the foregoing note, to discover that the circumstances are not explicitly stated.

Though the portrait fortunately lacks the usual label, with a confirmatory inscription in pseudo-Elizabethan handwriting, the story of its origin is decidedly suspicious. At first "nothing could be learnt" from the "obscure broker," a fact which accords well enough with its being "covered with dirt, and disregarded." The Little Britain ancestors clearly come afterward. At what particular time they were discovered we are not told, but we know that their discovery was first recorded in print at third or fourth hand, and in the vaguest possible terms, fifty-one years after the discovery of the portrait. For this reason, and because the story rests on mere hearsay, the ancestry cannot be regarded as evidence in favour of the portrait. If it tells either way, it tells against it. Yet in either case it has little or no value. Nothing is more human than to call in falsehood to substantiate truth.

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A slight deficiency in our knowledge as to the inscription is of vastly greater moment. The account in *The Builder* would naturally lead one to suppose that the inscription was not known until the portrait passed into the possession of the Bishop of Ely, or at least that, to the Bishop's personal knowledge, it emerged from obscurity after any conceivable motive for forgery was impossible ; and this, as Mr. Savage reports, was Mr. Graves's account of the circumstances. If the fact were a matter of indubitable record, it would be of the highest importance. But unfortunately the circumstances are nowhere stated at first hand ; and without such a definite statement it is impossible to draw any fixed conclusions. The full importance of this question as to the discovery of the inscription will presently appear.

One or two of the particulars of the history are not at all to be regarded as hearsay, and indeed might be regarded as important evidence. Whatever the facts as to the discovery of the portrait and of the inscription, they were of a nature to convince the Bishop of its authenticity, and what is even more to the purpose—though still far from decisive—Mr. Graves's professional acumen confirmed the Bishop's judgment. It is clearly unfortunate that these gentlemen have left us in ignorance as to the precise facts

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on so many important points, yet, considering the general neglect from which the portrait has suffered, it does not seem strange; and the fact that neither of them sought to make profit out of the picture throws the most favourable light on their neglect. It is as if the whole affair were above suspicion. Mr. Graves in particular attested the sincerity of his belief by an act of marked generosity to the great world of those who love and honour Shakespeare. Yet a similar belief and a similar generosity have often been shown in the case of portraits demonstrably spurious.

To complete the history of the portrait it is necessary to record critically the opinions that have been expressed with regard to it. In 1896 Dr. F. J. Furnivall very kindly went with me to Stratford to examine it. He was impressed with its likeness to the Droeshout engraving, but he regarded it as one of the many frauds. On January 11, 1897, he wrote me: "The more I think of the Ely Castle portrait the less I esteem it genuine." It should be remembered that Dr. Furnivall is one of those who refuse to consider seriously * any relic that cannot be traced to Shakespeare's family or intimate

* *The Academy*, December 21, 1895.

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friends, and who regard all painted portraits as frauds. In the case of the Ely Palace portrait the only specific reason I was able to gather was that it did not satisfy him as a likeness of Shakespeare.

Of those who have expressed opinions as to the portrait, only one, Mr. Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., has recorded specific reasons ; and though he has pursued his studies of painting in the faithful scientific manner of Morelli, he disclaims any thorough professional knowledge. At the time when he made his notes we were unable to get permission to remove the glass, so that the finest details of the painting could not be described. In consequence of this, as will appear later, his report as to the inscription is incomplete. His notes are as follows : "The shadows are loosely put in in brown, and the lower part of the face is much repainted. The portrait is virtually on the lines of the Droeshout engraving. The drawing, however, is inferior in that the right side of the face is out of perspective, being impossibly turned toward the spectator. This explains the fact that the eyes appear to be too close together. In the engraving all accents are stronger. The inscription is in the manner of the time, and is surely put in on the original surface. . . . A smooth, provincial

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technique of the period. . . . Apparently quite genuine." *

The most authoritative judgment as to the genuineness of the painting, as distinguished from the question as to whom the portrait represents, is in Mr. Sidney Lee's "Life of William Shakespeare" (1898-1900). Mr. Lee says: "Experts are of opinion that the picture was painted early in the seventeenth century." The most prominent of the experts to whom Mr. Lee refers is, apparently, Mr. Lionel Cust, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, who went with Mr. Lee to Stratford to study the portraits. If any minute examination of the portrait was made, we have no record of it.

Mr. Lee's verdict as to the excellence of the painting and its authenticity is puzzling. He says: "This painting is of high artistic value. The features are of a far more attractive and intellectual cast than in either the Droeshout painting or engraving, and the many differences in detail raise doubts whether the person represented can have been intended for Shakespeare." The fact that the portrait is of "high artistic value" is certainly not, *a priori*, a point against its authenticity.

* *Harper's Magazine*, May, 1897. The present wording is slightly altered, with Mr. Mather's approval.



THE ELY PALACE PORTRAIT.

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The Ely Palace Painting.

Shakespeare's object in having his likeness painted must presumably have been either personal vanity—of which any student of his life and works will readily acquit him—or else a desire to give the portrait to someone whose remembrance he held dear—some friend, perhaps the friend in the sonnets, or his wife and children. As we know that his means were ample, it seems likely that in either of the cases he would have availed himself of a capable painter. The artistic value of the painting, accordingly, is rather a point in its favour. Again, *a priori*, the fact that “the features are of a far more attractive and intellectual cast than in either the Droeshout painting or engraving”—and how much more attractive and intellectual they are can only be realised by seeing the two portraits themselves—is even more clearly in its favour. The burden of Mr. Lee's doubt seems to be on the score of the resemblance of the Ely Palace portrait to the print and the bust. We are unfortunate in that the scope of his “Life” did not permit him to enumerate what seemed to him the insuperable points of difference. But since it did not, we can only balance his verdict against that of others. Of those whose judgment is on record, Turton, Bishop of Ely, the writer in *The Builder*, Mr. Graves, Mr. Savage, Mr. Mather,

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and even Dr. Furnivall, have felt that there is a strong resemblance between the portrait and the engraving, and all except Dr. Furnivall have been inclined to think that the portrait was the original of the engraving. Mr. Lee is alone in finding serious points of difference.

In order to speak with authority on such a question, it is necessary to have studied all extant examples of Elizabethan portrait-painting, and to have learned all that can be known as to the technical details—what colours and brushes were used, how the colours were put on, and so forth. It is necessary, also, to have made an equally thorough study of the methods and results of the eighteenth-century forgers. If anyone who has thus equipped himself exists in England, or has ever existed, he has hidden his light.* The lack of all explicit information on the subject must be my excuse for presenting such facts as I have been able to gather.

* Several of the reputed portraits of Shakespeare, if subjected to a properly scientific study, might possibly turn out to have considerable claim to be regarded as authentic. The so-called Janssens portrait has been discredited by the fact that it could not have been painted by Janssens; and the Felton portrait has been discredited by the fact that Steevens, who championed it, characteristically laid himself open to grave suspicions of fraud. Both portraits, however, bear no little resemblance to the Droeshout engraving, and are admirably spirited and life-like. It is not improbable that both are worthier than those who have championed them.

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On December 21, 1901, Mr. Savage took the portrait out of its frame to dust it, and we subjected it to a careful scrutiny, that resulted in the addition of several details to our knowledge of the painting, a few of which are of vital importance to the present discussion. In the examination we were aided by Mr. Edgar Mills, an American collector, who was able by means of a magnifying-glass to trace many lines that are not apparent to the naked eye.

The features of this painting differ in a few particulars from those of the Droeshout engraving. The eyes are smaller (somewhat resembling the eyes in the bust), and the high lights are not in the same places. Both of the eyes are slightly out of drawing, an error not uncommon in the work of all but the most skilled draughtsman. The cheek is full, but it is scarcely, as in the engraving, in a way to be fat. The bridge of the nose in the painting is a trifle thinner, resembling the bridge of the nose in the bust, and it is more delicately modelled, which is to say that it is more like a normal nose. The moustache is smaller in that it is not spread wide upon the cheeks.

A distinct difference in the points from which the face is viewed in the painting and in the Droeshout engraving may be discovered

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on a close scrutiny. In the painting, the face—or at least the right cheek—is viewed from a point slightly more to the front.* At the same time the whole face is viewed from a point a trifle higher. The shifting of the view point to the front alters the line of the cheek; the sharp inward curve over the cheek-bone and the sharp outward curve over the bone above the eye are both avoided, so that the line is more fluent and graceful. The lower part of the line is curved outward a little more, giving somewhat more breadth of jaw and a slightly less pointed chin. The greater elevation of the point of view results in a slight foreshortening of the opening of the nostril, and in projecting the tip of the nose upon the lip, which has the effect of shortening the lip. At the same time the elevation of the view point accounts for the smaller interval between the edge of the collar or “band” and the lines of the shoulder.

A few further differences are revealed by a comparison of the colours of the painting with those of the bust. The hair in the bust is said to have been originally auburn, though it is now dark brown. The hair in the painting

* In the engraving, furthermore, the nose is incorrectly turned so as to be more in profile.

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is still auburn, and takes a richly brilliant colour in the sun. The eyes in the Ely Palace painting, according to Mr. Savage's notes of 1897, were a "brownish-grey colour." According to my notes, they were "dark grey or muddy blue." In 1901 we put the question to the test, and the result shows the need of the most scrupulous care in such matters. At first sight, the eyes appeared grey, but upon bringing the portrait into the sunlight a brownish tint became visible. The reason for this soon appeared. The base of the painting is brown, and as the outer coat is very thin and cracked, the basal colour shows through in spots when the painting is brought into a strong light, both in the pupil and in the iris, giving the eye a brownish cast. Yet the iris is clearly painted in a thin wash of dull grey-green, a colour quite different from any of which we have record in the bust. It is of course possible that the colours of the portrait have altered with time; but the supposition that the eyes of the painting were originally grey-green and the hair auburn is borne out in the general colour-scheme of the portrait, which is a very beautiful combination of green and brown. The difference between the colour of the eyes in the bust and in the painting is interesting, and perhaps important; but, as I

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have pointed out, the colours on the bust are not above suspicion, because of their age and the fact that they have been repeatedly tampered with—in point of fact, they appear to have altered markedly in recent times; and the probability of alteration is especially great with regard to the eyes. All these points of difference between the Ely Palace portrait and the two authentic portraits, it will be seen, are matters of minor detail.

The points of similarity have mainly to do with fundamental and highly significant traits of portraiture. The general distribution of masses is the same in the painting as in the engraving, and, with the necessary exception of the nose and the lips, it agrees very well with the distribution of masses in the bust. In all three portraits the hair falls in similar abundance about the ears; the forehead is similarly high and bald, the arching of the eyebrows and the angle at which they join the nose are closely similar. In the painting and the engraving the noses are of much the same length, and the cheek-bones have much the same prominence; the slightly smaller prominence of the right cheek-bone of the painting being amply explained by the shift in the point of view already noted, which results in a general softening of the line of the cheek.

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The left cheek-bone of the painting, it will be noticed, is prominently modelled. The nose, lip-beard, and chin are almost identical; the very lips have the same curves.

As regards the moustache, there is equal similarity. Here, however, and in one other particular, Mr. Woodburn's engraving of the Ely Palace portrait is at fault, and it is the more necessary to record the fact because in general, as compared with other engravings of Shakespeare's portraits, it is scrupulously accurate. It was executed in the modern manner—that is, by throwing a photograph of the portrait on the engraver's block, a process that insures the utmost precision of detail. After bringing the work almost to completion, Mr. Woodburn made a second journey to Stratford and corrected it by a close comparison with the original. It will be observed, now, that in the engraving the hair seems to fall naturally upon the lips. In the painting it is brushed upward and outward, as in the Droeshout engraving. This error is doubtless due to the fact that the true direction of the hair did not appear in the reduced and blurred photograph on Mr. Woodburn's block. It will be noticed, however, that the moustache is scored over with white lines in the proper direction. These possibly indicate an effort to correct the engraving in proof. All this explana-

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tion is necessary in order to emphasize the fact that the moustache of the Ely Palace painting resembles, not indeed the moustache of the Droeshout engraving as a whole, but the blacker portion of it; and this, as will appear when we return to a discussion of the various impressions of the Droeshout engraving, is a point in favour of the painting.

The costume of the Ely Palace portrait has a strong general resemblance to that of the Droeshout engraving, but it has also a few very striking points of difference. The collar or band differs slightly in size and position, but it is of precisely the same style. It is to be noted that in Mr. Woodburn's engraving the parallel ribs beneath the chin are incorrectly made to extend to the edge of the band. In the painting they terminate at the inner line of the hem, as they do in the Droeshout engraving. There appear to be no spikes arising from the neck; but their absence is amply accounted for in the fact that the surface of the collar has obviously been vigorously scrubbed and repainted.

As to the jerkin of the Ely Palace portrait, certain details deserve to be recorded as matter of fact, though they have no direct bearing on our argument. The lower portion has been cleaned. In parts the surface has apparently been scrubbed away, and the remaining paint

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covered with a thin coating of varnish, which is not much cracked. The upper portion of the jerkin is covered with a thick and somewhat opaque varnish, which is much cracked. At first sight it seemed that the outline of this upper portion might be formed by a chain hanging about the neck, but we were unable to descry any details of such a chain. The lower or cleaned portion of the jerkin seems to have been embroidered or brocaded with a pattern irregularly composed of large and small scrolls, the largest being less than an inch long. These are not everywhere discernible, a fact which is perhaps due to the scrubbing of the surface. There is a row of buttons down the middle, which are not all clearly discernible, but which number some twenty-three or twenty-four. They are represented by a black dot surrounded by a circle the size of the end of an ordinary lead-pencil, and are less than half an inch distant from centre to centre. On certain parts of the jerkin, a patterned strap is discernible which resembles a step-ladder, the width of which is considerably less than the diameter of a lead-pencil. One peculiarity of doublets of this period is that they often had embroidered straps running diagonally from the shoulder to the waist, giving prominence to the lines of the bust. Some indications of these

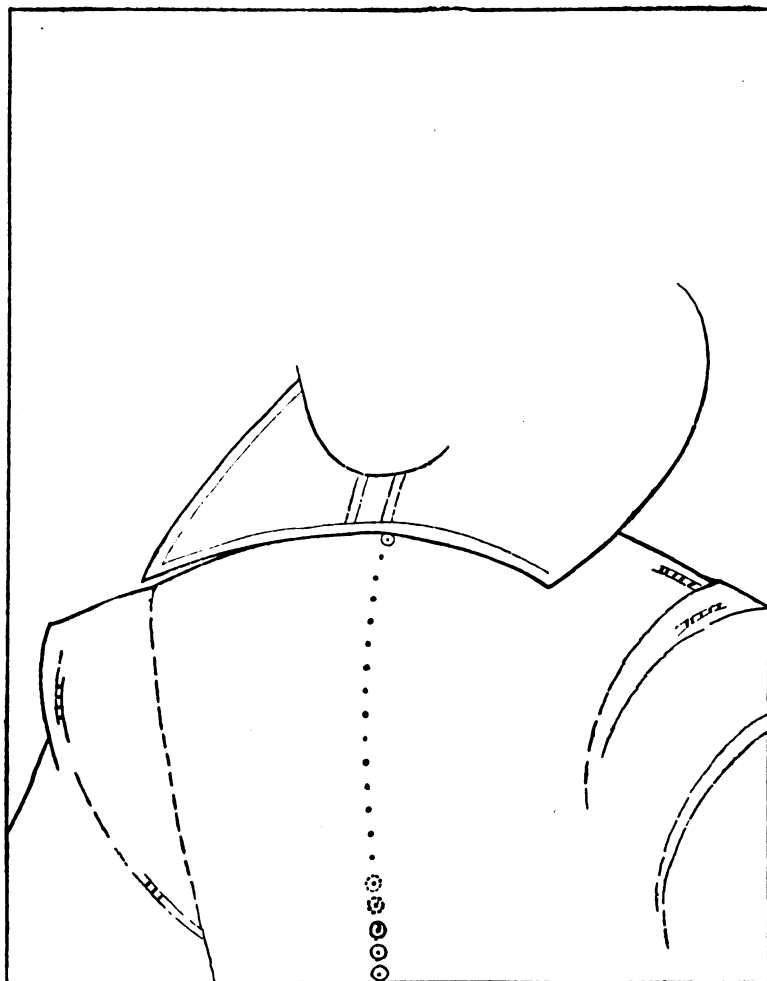
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we found in the portrait, and a generally accurate rendering of them may be described in Mr. Woodburn's engraving. In the region of the black varnish we were unable to trace the lines distinctly, and below it they came to an end before reaching the bottom of the picture. On going to the Memorial Building we found a portrait of the Earl of Southampton, by Van Somers (also the gift of Mr. Henry Graves), in which diagonals of the kind we were looking for terminated in a point just below the breast. If the yoke of opaque varnish could be properly cleaned away, it is possible that Shakespeare's costume (if it is Shakespeare's) would show a fashion similar to that of his patron. In any case it would probably be possible to make out further details as to the embroidery on the garment. Some treatment of the portrait is apparently necessary, for under the magnifying-glass the paint gives evidence of separating beneath the varnish.

What an artist would call the drawing of the body, in the Ely Palace portrait, is very different from that in the Droeshout engraving, and here we have to deal with facts that are important in our argument. The shoulders appear broad in proportion to the head, and even allowing for the effect of the wings, they

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tally well with William Beeston's statement, recorded by Aubrey, that Shakespeare was "a handsome, well-shapt man." The lines that surround both wings are for the most part clearly discernible, and are reproduced from a rough tracing on the next page. It will be noticed that the jerkin, unlike that in the Droeshout engraving, is obviously the same on both sides, and, moreover, that it is clearly represented in three-quarter view. The strap about the portrait's left shoulder is circular, while that about the right shoulder vanishes in the profile of the right breast. The diagonal straps—too indeterminate to be traced—are in similar perspective, that on the portrait's left breast curving toward the middle of the body, that on the right away from it. The turning of the body is also evident in the line of buttons, which, as we took great pains to demonstrate, curves slightly as it ascends toward the portrait's right, and then back again as it approaches the collar, quite as the perspective would require. Thus the costume throughout is drawn with a vigorous and workman-like feeling for the body beneath, which in a painting of no extraordinary general skill is an indication that it was done from life. One defect is discernible. In view of the general scheme of foreshortening, the wing



THE COSTUME OF THE ELY PALACE PORTRAIT.

A rough tracing of the main lines to indicate the perspective. The diagonals from the shoulder toward the buttons were too indeterminate to be traced.

The Ely Palace Painting.

on the portrait's right shoulder does not sufficiently vanish ; it is impossibly turned toward the spectator. It is precisely this fault, abetted by the false diagonal, that has caused the two sides of the costume in the Droeshout engraving to appear different. This similarity, perhaps even more than the similarity of features, indicates that the two portraits, different as they are in many details, are somehow or other closely related. We shall return to the point further on. For the present it is necessary to complete our record as to the technical details of the painting.

The inscription, at first sight, seems to be quite genuine. The name of Shakespeare, which usually appears in the demonstrably spurious portraits, is absent. The lettering is in the unostentatious block capitals anciently in vogue for the purpose, and gives evidence of age and decay. In all but one minute particle of the inscription there is every evidence that the paint was laid on the original surface. But this minute particle throws a doubt upon the whole. Mr. Edgar Mills pointed out that a flake of the green surface paint which has fallen off, exposing the brown beneath, has carried with it the top of the figure nine, and that the black line of the numeral has been continued over

A New Portrait of Shakespeare.

the flake spot. Clearly this minute part of the inscription was put on after the painting was old. Yet it does not follow that the whole inscription is a late addition. In other parts of the portrait there are evidences of clumsy retouching, an incident of the so-called restoration which has ruined so many an invaluable legacy of the past ; and the hand that laid impious paint on the face of Shakespeare would not have scrupled to restore a crumbling inscription. Nothing is commoner than portraits of undoubted authenticity on which an inscription has been either added or completely painted over, as may be seen on the most casual stroll through the National Portrait Gallery. I need only cite the portrait, by Gheerardt, of Mary, Countess of Pembroke—"Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother"—on which the entire inscription, including the motto, "No spring till now," is so brilliant that it seems scarcely to have dried. In the Ely Palace portrait the black paint over the flake spot seems to be of a slightly different and brighter shade, which tends to show that it is a late addition, and that the rest of the inscription is genuine. Moreover, if this defect in the inscription is to be cited against the portrait, it must also be cited in its favour ; for any forger clever enough to abbre-

The Ely Palace Painting.

viate his inscription in the ancient manner, to use block letters, and to omit the name of Shakespeare, would also have been clever enough to patch the surface over which he painted. It is more than possible that the good Bishop himself had the portrait restored and the inscription touched up at the time when he is supposed to have discovered it, and neglected to inform us of this as of other indispensable details. Yet possibilities, even probabilities, are not facts ; and this inscription, which might have been a most important—almost a final—bit of evidence, must be ruled out of court.

The lower part of the face and the collar have been heavily repainted, probably to offset the effect of a vigorous scrubbing. The jaw lacks modelling, and the shadow on the collar is confused. Fortunately the hair and eyes and the entire body appear not to have been seriously repainted, and the outward brushed lines of the moustache are seemingly intact. Wherever the portrait has not been restored the paint is very thin. In several places the brown of the foundation shows through, as in the instance of the eyes already noted ; and in a few of the places that have been scrubbed, notably the lower portion of the jerkin, the cracks reveal the oak of the panel,

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In all this there is no evidence of an underlying portrait, and, in fact, it is virtually impossible that this should be even the "other Shakespeare" which Holder thought so clever a forgery.

The strongest evidence of the authenticity of the Ely Palace portrait is to be derived from the character of the moustache and of the drawing of the costume; but before this can be properly presented it is necessary to consider the portrait that claims to be the original of the Droeshout engraving.

The So-called Droeshout Original.

THE discussions of the so-called Droeshout Original portrait have been as copious and as heated as those of the Ely Palace portrait have been meagre and uncontroversial. The portrait was loaned to the collection in the Shakespeare Memorial Building at Stratford in 1892 by the late Mr. H. C. Clements, of Sydenham. Of its previous history we know little or nothing. It was exhibited at the Alexandra Palace in the early part of the nineteenth century, but for some reason or other, perhaps because of its dingy appearance, it attracted little attention. Like the Ely Palace portrait, it has a pedigree—at least, it is stated to have belonged originally to a member of Shakespeare's family. The story is, of course, mere hearsay, and such a story, as I have pointed out in connection with the Ely Palace portrait, is neither for a portrait's authenticity nor against it. Mr. Clements affixed on the back an inscription to the effect that it had been exhibited in London in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and that it was the original of the Droeshout print. The last statement contains no inherent improbability, and, in fact, at first sight seems

VI.—The
So-called
Droeshout
Original.

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highly probable, for the two portraits are virtually identical.

Mr. Edgar Flower, of Stratford-upon-Avon, we are told,* after carefully examining the portrait, "felt perfectly convinced that it was a life portrait, and none other than the original of the famous engraving prefixed to the first folio (1623) of Shakespeare's plays." His conviction, we are assured, "was confirmed by Mr. Sam. Timmins, F.S.A., and several antiquaries to whom opportunity had been afforded of studying the picture." These gentlemen, it would appear, were amateurs, and mainly personal friends of Mr. Flower's. Since then, with an enthusiasm as rare in England as it is admirable, Mr. Flower has been untiring on behalf of the portrait. The first result of his advocacy was that Mrs. Flower, of Avonbank, Stratford-upon-Avon, widow of the Shakespearean editor, Mr. Charles Flower, and sister-in-law of Mr. Edgar Flower, bought the portrait from the widow of Mr. Clements for a considerable price, and generously presented it to the Shakespeare Memorial. This brought it to the notice of professional connoisseurs whose

* An account of the portrait by the librarian of the Memorial Building, W. Salt Brasington, Esq., in *Harper's Magazine* for May, 1897. I am indebted to this account for other details recorded above.

The So-called Droeshout Original.

reputations were concerned in any judgment they might pass upon it.

A controversy followed, during which the chief partisan of the portrait felt that he had been imputed with disingenuousness, and the chief opponent was charged with ignoring a fact "evident to any carpenter." * To summarise such a controversy with impartiality is a task of no little difficulty, but it is lightened by a belief, really amounting to knowledge, that, in spite of the heat developed in the friction of contrary opinions, the motives of all parties have been sincere. One precaution, however, must be insisted upon. In the case of a discussion so deeply tinged with personal feeling, it is doubly unscientific to cite judgment at second hand. In several cases, opinions that have been so cited in all honesty of purpose, will appear very different from the same opinions when written down dispassionately by those who formed them. When men notably well qualified to judge are cited at second hand, the citations are worth recording; but a due caution will prevent us from treating them as weighty evidence. Fortunately the loss of these hearsay opinions will not be

* A letter from Mr. Edgar Flower to *The Times*, December 9, 1898.

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serious, for we have the opinions of almost all the leading connoisseurs of England in their own written statements.

After the portrait was bought for the Shakespeare Memorial, it was submitted to Mr. Dyer, of the National Portrait Gallery, perhaps the most expert picture cleaner in England. Mr. Dyer is said to have "reported in favour of its authenticity."* This is, of course, one of the hearsay opinions, and it is characteristically vague. It may be noted that, as will appear later, several of those who permit themselves to be cited as "in favour of its authenticity" have refused to state, without important qualifications, that they believe the portrait to have been the original of the engraving. Shortly after this, at Mr. Flower's invitation, Mr. Lionel Cust, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, and Mr. Sidney Colvin, Keeper of Prints in the British Museum, visited Stratford. Seeing that, "if genuine, the portrait might turn out to be the only genuine painted portrait of Shakespeare in existence," they "persuaded Mr. Flower to bring it up to London, and submit it to the inspection of the Society of

* Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries, December 12 1895, p. 1.

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Antiquaries."* Mr. Flower cordially invited the most searching criticism.

Mr. Cust pointed out that the picture bears, in "cursive characters," the name Willm Shakespeare and the date 1609. He stated his opinion that the portrait was a genuine painting of the date assigned to it, and that the matter resolved itself into the question whether the engraving was copied from the picture, or the picture from the engraving. He himself was inclined to the former of the alternatives.† As appears hereafter, Mr. Cust's words are used with scrupulous accuracy. Strong as has been his inclination to believe, he has never been able to state that he does believe.

As to the other opinions expressed the report of the Society is silent, but I was able, in 1896, to collect a few of them. They may perhaps be repeated as a matter of history, but here also we must remember that we are dealing with hearsay. Dr. F. J. Furnivall assailed the picture with his customary vigour,‡ on the ground that it has no pedigree, and declared that it was a "make-up of the late seventeenth

* Report of the Society, December, 1895, p. 1.

† *Ibid.*, p. 2.

‡ A report of the meeting in *The Academy*, December 21, 1895, No. 1233.

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century from the print and the bust, both of which the artist had seen." When I brought to his notice the reference quoted earlier to contemporary portraits of Shakespeare, he laughed it aside; but, out of his great generosity and kindness, he went with me to Stratford, and was forced to admit that no trace of the bust is discernible. He had overlooked the fact that in the engraving the cheek shows a marked fulness. But his judgment as to the portrait, and, in fact, as to all painted portraits of Shakespeare, remains unchanged.

In September, 1896, I had an interview with Mr. Sidney Colvin at the British Museum. My notes of this interview are to the effect that, though he assigned the portrait to a very early date, perhaps the first half of the seventeenth century, he regarded it as a very careful copy of the print. Since then he has pursued Fabian tactics, and I have no means of stating, on his written authority, whether this is the opinion he expressed at the meeting, or whether he still holds it.

Sir Charles Robinson, Her Majesty's Surveyor of Pictures, and Director of the Gallery of the Kensington Museum, is reported * to

* *Academy*, December 21, 1895.

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have taken exception at the meeting to the inscription, and to have pointed out that the name and date would have to be abandoned. The exact ground of his objection is not stated, but it is probably the fact that he regarded it as in cursive characters. Mr. Sidney Colvin told me later (according to my notes) that this "cursive" inscription was unique in his experience. The custom at that period was to use block letters, such as we find in the Ely Palace portrait. Sir Charles seems, nevertheless, to have still attributed the painting to the early part of the seventeenth century. On the next day, however, he had quite changed his mind.* His reasons,† which he explained to Mr. Edgar Flower, were, first, that "he had discovered the lines of a collar, and other indications showing that there was an underlying portrait; and second, that the portrait was painted on a panel of foreign white wood." The existence of an underlying portrait has never been denied, and at once calls up the shades of Zincke and Holder. But Sir Charles's statement as to the wood of the panel was speedily disposed of. Whether or

* Letter of Mr. Edgar Flower to *The Times*, December 9, 1898.

† *Ibid.*

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not any carpenter could have recognised the fact, Mr. G. R. M. Murray, of the Botanical Department of the British Museum, pronounced the panel to be elm, one of the commonest of English woods. This judgment was published, and had the effect of discrediting Sir Charles's conclusions in general. Nevertheless, in a book entitled "The Connoisseur" (1897), Mr. F. S. Robinson, in a chapter on "Frauds and Forgeries," repeated Sir Charles Robinson's statement as to the panel.

When Mr. Sidney Lee's "Life of Shakespeare" appeared, in the autumn of 1898, a reproduction of the so-called Droeshout Original had the place of honour as frontispiece, and the text contained this statement: "In all probability Martin Droeshout directly based his work on [this] painting."

Sir Charles now put his views definitely on record in his own words: *

Prima facie it might quite reasonably be expected that sooner or later the original painting or drawing from which Droeshout's print must have been taken would come to light, and so apparently genuine a character was this particular "claimant" that the members of the Society of Antiquaries were at first strongly inclined to believe in him; but this

* A letter to *The Times*, December 3, 1898. The ungrammatical wording is no doubt due to the difficulties offered by Sir Charles's handwriting.

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was in the evening, after dinner, when people are often inclined to see things in the most favourable light. Usually, however, the evening light was not sufficient to enable any certain judgment to be formed as to the *pros* and *cons* of this dark and dirty oil picture.

A reinspection, however, in the full light of day, threw quite a different complexion on the matter. It was then soon perceived that the picture was of precisely the same class as the majority of the other *soi-disant* Shakespeare portraits—that is to say, it was substantially an ancient sixteenth or seventeenth century portrait, painted in oil on panel, which had been fraudulently repainted and vamped up in various ways—metamorphosed, in fact, into a portrait of the great dramatist, probably towards the end of the last or the beginning of the present century.

Apparently the original portrait was that of a lady, for the leading forms and details of the work could still be discerned in many places by a practised eye piercing through the fraudulent envelope.

There was, moreover, one other damning circumstance. The picture was painted on a substantial white-wood panel, put together in the Italian manner—an almost certain indication that the original work was that of an Italian master, doubtless working in his own country. Had it been a genuine contemporary portrait of Shakespeare, on the other hand, painted in this country, the material on which it was executed would just as certainly have been a thin oak panel, simply glued up in the usual English manner of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.*

With regard to the panel, Sir Charles's judgment has at least this virtue—that it has

* This, it will be remembered, is the case with the Ely Palace portrait.

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been steadfast against all and everything ; but the rights of the question at issue would perhaps have been better served if he had more carefully considered the facts opposed to him. It is only just to remember that he is one of the two deponents in the controversy who have given the reasons for their opinions, and that we owe to him the discovery of the strongest fact thus far recorded in evidence against the painting—the presence of an underlying portrait. If he could be persuaded to give the question a calm and searching examination, and to record the results of it, students of Shakespeare would be much in his debt. But, as matters stand, the chief result of his letter has been to discredit all of his contributions to the discussion. Two days later, letters appeared in *The Times* from Mr. Lee and Mr. Cust roundly condemning his opinions, and these had the effect of silencing his battery.

A letter from Mr. Flower appeared on December 9th. Those who know the pains Mr. Flower has taken to secure the portrait, and to place it where all lovers of Shakespeare may see it, will, I suppose, agree that it is due to him, as well as to the portrait, to consider carefully what he has to say, and especially as he is the only person beside Sir Charles Robinson who has given reasons as well as opinions.

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He says: "The lines of a collar, and other indications showing that there is an underlying portrait, really tell more in favour of the originality of the portrait than [in favour] of the possibility of its being a clever forgery. For it would be a common occurrence for a painter, making a portrait of no especial value at the time, to take some discarded panel and paint upon it; while anyone painting an elaborate and careful 'forgery' would scarcely be so careless as to leave the lines of a different shaped collar underneath."

The plea that the artist who painted Shakespeare might have used a discarded panel is ingenious, and not in itself improbable. Mr. F. S. Robinson, in "The Connoisseur," relates several instances in point. Thus Sir Joshua Reynolds sent a painting to Russia, with the remark that there "were eleven pictures, more or less good, upon it." Again: "While a rapid sketch-portrait of Rembrandt by himself was being cleaned by its owner, a well-known connoisseur, some strange evolution seemed to be taking place upon the surface, and it was not long before he realised that if he did not cease his operation he would be the possessor, not of a Rembrandt portrait in the painter's best manner, but of a 'Joseph and His Brethren' of an earlier period. Joseph was clad in bright

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red breeches, which the great artist had adapted to his own red waistcoat." It is clear that in any ordinary case the presence of an underlying portrait need not disquiet us. But this is not an ordinary case. The great mass of Shakespeare portraits are known to be forgeries, and the favourite method of the forgers is known to have been to paint over an old portrait. The underlying portrait, therefore, while in no way conclusive against the Droeshout "Original," raises a very serious doubt.

The argument that a forger clever enough to copy the Droeshout engraving on an old panel in an archaic manner would have effaced all traces of the portrait beneath is quite as ingenious, and, I think, even less convincing. In the first place, we are by no means sure that the underlying paint was at first visible. It is certain that any object which has been painted over in oils becomes increasingly evident as the oils dry out. On this point, also, Mr. Robinson's "Connoisseur" is explicit: "Underlying paint, especially dark paint, has a habit of appearing through the paint which is laid upon it. [The painter of the Droeshout 'Original'] endeavoured to obviate this contingency by painting his Shakespeare's face very solidly; but the inevitable has supervened in spite of his precautions." Even at this late

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day, however, the underlying portrait cannot be detected by ordinary observers. After a careful search, I was unable to make it out, and Mr. Mills was no more successful. If, moreover, as Mr. Flower implies, it is sufficiently evident to warn the purchasing connoisseur, surely Mr. Flower himself, and the antiquaries to whom opportunity had been offered of studying the picture, should have seen it and reported it when they were inducing Mrs. Flower to buy the portrait. Yet they somehow failed to do so. Let us suppose, however, that a careful buyer could always have detected the underlying portrait. It still remains a fact that Holder and Zincke sold dozens of counterfeit presentments beside which this is Hyperion to a satyr. What Holder thought of the people who insisted in believing in the frauds they bought of him, he has told us in a manner which is certainly frank, and might even be called unseemly. But let us still suppose that Mr. Flower's explanation as to the underlying portrait is plausible. The fact remains that the characters in which the inscription is written, as has already been stated, are so suspicious that they have been ruled out of the case. When everything else is above question, an ingenious argument is enough to dispose of one suspicious circumstance, but two suspicious

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circumstances vastly multiply the likelihood of fraud, and to these two others will be added. For the present it is necessary to complete the record of opinions as to the portrait.

Mr. Flower goes on to say: "Every engraver and authority I have consulted—and they have been many—argue that the engraving must have been taken from the oil painting, and not *vice versa*." As regards the engravers this statement is no doubt true enough; at all events, Mr. Woodburn, who made the accompanying reproduction of the portrait, held this opinion. Incontestably there are many points—I need only instance the superior rendering of the hair, the superior modelling of the forehead and the bridge of the nose, and the very expressive curves in the corners of the mouth, in which the "Droeshout" painting is distinctly more like a human being than the Droeshout engraving.* The fact is interesting and perhaps important; but the final judge on the question in hand is not the engraver, but the authority on old paintings. And with regard to these authorities Mr. Flower's statement apparently requires qualification. I cannot find that all or

* On the other hand, it should be noted that, in that the nose of the Droeshout "Original" is seen more in profile than the rest of the face, it is inferior in drawing to that in the print.



THE DROESHOUT ORIGINAL PORTRAIT.

**THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS**

The So-called Droeshout Original.

any of them have said that the engraving "must have been taken" from the painting. Mr. Samuel Timmins, F.S.A., is reported to have written a letter to the meeting of the Society of Antiquaries,* to say that, in his opinion, the portrait is a likeness of Shakespeare "in his habit as he lived." But here again we have an admirable instance of the pitfalls that lurk in second-hand evidence. On the face of the statement it would seem that Mr. Timmins was convinced that the portrait is the original of the print; but, strictly interpreted, the words attributed to him are not incompatible with the reverse opinion. To make the point clear I have only to quote from a letter from Mr. Lionel Cust, dated Nov. 6, 1896: "To the best of my belief [the Droeshout painting] is the only painted likeness of Shakespeare which exists." Apparently this is an even stronger statement than that of Mr. Timmins, but Mr. Cust subjoins: "Whether done during his lifetime or not must remain a matter of uncertainty. . . . I cannot pledge myself to its having preceded the Droeshout engraving." Are Mr. Timmins and Mr. Cust to be reckoned among the authorities who "argue that the engraving *must* have been taken from the oil

* Report of the Society, p. 7.

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painting"? Sir Theodore Martin has also been cited as one of the favourable authorities. Mr. Lee, in his letter to *The Times*, reports of him: "He expressed to me, with much enthusiasm, his satisfaction at my choice of the Droeshout painting for the frontispiece of the new 'Life,' and declared himself convinced that that painting was the basis of the far-famed engraving by Martin Droeshout." Let us compare with this a statement made by Sir Theodore to Mr. Flower, of which Mr. Flower has kindly given me a copy. The statement is in a letter written on November 12, 1896, shortly after a careful examination of the portrait. "The question—and the only one to my mind—is: Was this the picture from which the first folio portrait was engraved, or was the picture painted from the engraving? . . . I feel confident that the portrait is an (*sic*) original work." Perhaps I am wrong in thinking this statement more guarded and less absolute; but it is evident that in neither passage does Sir Theodore state that the engraving *must* have been taken from the oil painting. I can only conclude that Mr. Flower's enthusiastic conviction, combined with a most natural indignation at the reiteration of a statement demonstrated to be false, has led him into a substantial error.

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A similar error, though less pronounced, appeared in Mr. Lee's "Shakespeare." The edition of 1898 says : "Connoisseurs, including Sir Edward Poynter, Mr. Sidney Colvin, and Mr. Lionel Cust, have almost unreservedly pronounced the picture to be anterior in date to the engraving, and they have reached the conclusion that in all probability Martin Droeshout directly based his work upon the painting." Sir Edward Poynter is President of the Royal Academy, and also Director of the National Gallery ; Mr. Lionel Cust is Director of the National Portrait Gallery, and Mr. Sidney Colvin is Keeper of Prints in the British Museum. If these experts held the opinions Mr. Lee attributed to them there would be nothing for a layman to add. It so happened that I had a letter from Sir E. J. Poynter expressing the opinion directly opposite to that Mr. Lee attributed to him, and also notes of the conversation in which Mr. Colvin animadverted on the "cursive" inscription, and said that he was inclined to think the portrait an early copy of the engraving. These I brought to Mr. Lee's notice. In the library edition of his "Life," published in 1899, the so-called Droeshout Original was replaced as frontispiece by a reproduction in colours of the Stratford bust ; and Sir E. J. Poynter was

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omitted from the list of connoisseurs in favour of the portrait.

Mr. Sidney Colvin and Mr. Lionel Cust he still, however, quoted as "almost unreservedly" pronouncing the picture to be "anterior in date to the engraving." With regard to Mr. Colvin's opinions there are thus two second-hand reports, which are as nearly contradictory as possible. In 1898, and again in 1901, I tried to secure his written statement of them; but while he has made no correction in the words my notes attribute to him, he is apparently—and, considering the personal turn the discussion has taken, not unnaturally—unwilling to be drawn into it. The opinion Mr. Lee attributes to him accordingly, that the portrait is "anterior in date to the engraving," is not, at least in one very important meaning of the word, "unreserved."

Mr. Cust has been, from the time of the meeting of the Society of Antiquaries in 1895, "inclined to think" that the engraving was copied from the painting. In 1896 he had the extreme kindness to give me a written statement of his opinion, and in 1901 he wrote me that his opinion was unaltered. His statement is as follows: "In spite of its being painted over another portrait, I still regard [the Droeshout

The So-called Droeshout Original.

painting] as a picture of the early seventeenth century. I cannot pledge myself to its having *preceded* the Droeshout engraving, although my inclination is to think so. I feel quite convinced that it is not one of the countless forgeries with which the world is perpetually being dosed. The portrait agrees with the engraving, and may therefore be accepted as a portrait of Shakespeare. . . . Whether done during his lifetime or not must remain a matter of uncertainty. It is not the work of a good painter." Few documents have ever come to my notice which indicate more clearly the tragic difference between the inclination to believe and belief.

What, then, are the judgments on the portrait given by the four great experts who have appeared in evidence? Sir E. J. Poynter and Sir J. C. Robinson are flatly against it. Mr. Colvin's opinion is so far from being unreserved that we have it only at second hand, and in two radically contradictory statements at that. Only Mr. Cust expresses an inclination to believe in it, and expressly draws the line between his inclination and belief.

Thus far we have dealt mainly with opinions. A question of authenticity can be decided with finality only on the ground of facts. Some day an expert will appear who

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has the opportunity, the patience, and the enthusiasm to learn all that can be known of all the reputed paintings of Shakespeare; in the meantime I hope to be pardoned for appending the few further observations I am able to collect.

Mr. W. Salt Brassington, Librarian of the Shakespeare Memorial at Stratford, has described the portrait as follows*: "The portrait is painted in oil colours upon an elm panel formed of two boards joined horizontally, and secured across the back by a strip of wood, and has for its groundwork a thin coating of white composition, or gesso, primed red. . . . The . . . body is drawn on a slightly smaller scale [than the head]. . . . The relative measurements of the portrait are precisely the same as those of Droeshout's engraving. From certain lines visible upon the picture, it is evident that a collar or ruff of a different shape has been painted over. The drawing of the head is powerful, though the style is formal, after the manner of the sixteenth rather than the seventeenth century. The shadows appear to have been painted green; the warmer flesh-tones have faded. The face is oval, the hair a rich dark brown, the moustache of a lighter shade;

* *Harper's Magazine*, May, 1897.

The So-called Droeshout Original.

the eyes neither hazel nor blue, but of a shade between these colours. Upon the upper left-hand corner of the picture is inscribed in cursive characters, 'Willm. Shakespeare. 1609.' A large plain collar with pleatings and a narrow hem surrounds the neck. The doublet is black, buttoned up the front, and trimmed with handsome gold lace. The panel measures 23 inches by $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches full measure, $22\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches slight measurements. . . . There is now no doubt that it is a life portrait of Shakespeare, painted in 1609."

Mr. Mather's observations are as follows: "Life size, painted on a thin coating of gesso. The panel is English elm, worm-holed, and of undoubted antiquity. Red appears in the ground where the over-painting has cracked off. Hair apparently painted in bitumen. All the drawing precisely like that in the print, including costume. Technique, an illogical combination of broad, scratchy, and of smooth. Clearly a late copy of the print."

A few further facts may be noted. Several blisters and other like imperfections are due to a fire which occurred at Alexandra Palace when the portrait was there on exhibition. These minor accidents it was impossible to reproduce in Mr. Woodburn's engraving. Though the coating of gesso is thin, the paint of the features

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is thick and heavy. In colouring the portrait resembles the bust, with a single exception—I failed to find the least trace of hazel in the eyes; they are simply muddy blue. Some of the worm-holes are clear-cut, others seem painted round the edges. At least one (on the line of the right cheek-bone) had, according to my notes of 1896, been painted over; it was then discernible only because the paint had sagged into it. In 1901 the surface paint in this worm-hole had apparently been picked away. If these appearances are to be relied on, the painter sought to give an appearance of antiquity by using a worm-holed panel.

The inscription, as has already been pointed out, is very suspicious. The statement, however, that it is in cursive characters apparently requires to be qualified. Strictly speaking, the peculiarity of cursive characters is that they run into one another, so that the pen or brush need not be raised from the surface. Clearly this is not the case with the inscription in question. It would be more accurate to say that the characters are what printers call lower-case italics. No strictly cursive inscription, in all probability, is to be found in the authentic portraits of the date; but inscriptions in lower-case italics are not unknown. In the National Portrait Gallery, the same suite of rooms that

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contains the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare contains two portraits of the seventeenth century with lower-case italic inscriptions—namely, that of John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, and the portrait by Gheerardt of Mary, Countess of Pembroke. Yet the characters of the inscription on the Droeshout painting are none the less suspicious. Other inscriptions of the period are as carefully lettered as the inscription on a monument, even when not inscribed in monumental capitals. This inscription is loosely put on in freehand—so loosely as to give the impression of cursive lettering.

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VII.—Com- A VERY important bit of evidence with
parisons. regard to the authenticity of the Droeshout
painting and the Ely Palace painting will be
revealed by comparing them with extant copies
of the Droeshout engraving. In the process
of printing the folios of the seventeenth century,
the plate of this engraving went through
several clearly distinct stages, and there is,
besides, a unique copy of what is almost
certainly an original proof, which differs not-
ably from all other impressions. If, now, the
Droeshout painting were the original of the
engraving, we should naturally expect it to
resemble most nearly this proof, or, at least,
the first and most perfect of the folio im-
pressions. If, on the other hand, it appears
that the painting resembles more nearly the
latest and most debased stages of the engraving,
the fact will as clearly tend to show that the
painting was taken from the engraving.

The proof of the engraving is in the
Halliwell-Phillips collection of Shakespearian
rarities, now in the possession of Marsden J.
Perry, Esq., Providence, Rhode Island. Accord-
ing to the calendar of the collection, it shows the
engraving in "its original proof state, before it

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was altered by an inferior hand." The late F. W. Fairholt, F.S.A., has described the differences due to this alteration: "The proof is remarkable for clearness of tone, the shadows being very delicately rendered. . . . This is particularly visible in the arch under the eye, and in the muscles of the mouth; the expression of the latter is much altered in the later states of the plate by the enlargement of the upturned mustache, which hides and destroys the true character of this part of the face. The whole of the shadows have been darkened by cross-hatching and coarse dotting, particularly on the chin; this gives a coarse and undue prominence to some parts of the portrait, the forehead particularly. In this early state of the plate the hair is darker than any of the shadows on the head, and flows softly and naturally; in the retouched plate the shadow is much darker than the roots of the hair, imparting a swelled look to the head, and giving the hair the appearance of a raised wig. . . . [In the proof] no shadow falls across the collar." The phrase, "the later states of the engraving," would naturally refer to the first three folio impressions. Yet the differences noted are similar to those between these three and the fourth folio impressions. It thus seemed possible that Mr. Fairholt meant only the fourth folio, in which

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case one would not be justified in assuming any great difference between the proof and the first folio engraving. Mr. Edwin Collins Frost, of Providence, R.I., has courteously sent me these admirably explicit observations :—

“There can be no question that Fairholt means that the proof differs in the respects which he mentions from all other known copies of the engraving, and not merely from prints in the fourth folio. In the ordinary impressions (in F_1 — F_3) the moustache is much wider—almost one-half wider, I should think—than in the proof impression. The chin in the proof impression also lacks the unshaven appearance so noticeable afterwards. I do not think it can fairly be said that there is absolutely no shadow on the collar, though Fairholt does, I suppose, keep within the truth when he says that ‘no shadow falls *across* the collar.’ There is a suggestion of shadow, but it is near the neck, and not clearly defined as in all later impressions. If my opinion is of any interest to you, I may say that the test of the Droeshout proof seems to me a good one.”

May not the “proof” have been a print-seller’s portrait, the plate of which was touched up for use in the folio ?

Every one of these alterations in the plate before printing the folios, with the single

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exception of the shadow on the collar, is an injury to the print. The reason for their existence is explained by the late Mr. William Smith, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, whose knowledge of early engraving was unrivalled: "I fully believe that, on what is technically termed proving the plate, it was thought that much of the work was so delicate as not to allow of a sufficient number of impressions being printed."

Let us now consider the engraving as it appears in the folios of the seventeenth century. I quote from notes made from the copies in the British Museum:—

"The print in the first folio is by far the best of the four. The lines are all clear and sharp, and give a generally consistent gradation of values. In the second and third folios the engraving has lost many of its values as the result of wear. The print in the fourth folio, at a superficial glance, seems more like that in the first folio than that in either the second or third folio. A closer view shows that it is, in fact, the farthest removed from it. As the plate is said to have been worked over by the engraver before printing the first folio, so it has been again re-engraved before printing the fourth folio, a complete new system of lines having been added. For example, in the three

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first folios the shadow on the portrait's right temple and cheek is made by a single set of parallel lines, with sometimes a row of fine dots in each interlinear space. In the fourth folio a second set of lines crosses these original lines, deepening the effect of shadow. Again, in the first folio the shadows on the portrait's left temple and cheek are made by two sets of lines crossing each other, with sometimes a dot in the rectangles thus formed. In the fourth folio a third set of lines is added traversing the other two. Now, the result of the deepening the shadows on the face and forehead would naturally be to necessitate a similar deepening of the shade of the other features, and in point of fact the hair of the head and of the lips has been scored over by a system of heavy parallel lines. In the first folio, according to Fairholt, the moustache has been enlarged, so as to hide and destroy the true character of the muscles of the mouth. In the fourth folio the enlargement has been reinforced by heavy cross-hatching. As a result, there seems to be much more hair on the lips than in the first folio, and it seems to grow considerably further upon the cheeks."

If, now, the Droeshout painting were the original from which the Halliwell-Phillips engraving was drawn, we should expect it to have

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a narrow moustache slightly upturned. In point of fact, it has a moustache quite as dark and quite as upturned as that in the fourth folio print. This clearly tends to the conclusion that the painting was a copy of the print, and that it was, in all probability, copied from the print of the fourth folio. In the Ely Palace portrait, it will be noticed, the moustache, though turned upward and outward, is not spread so far nor so thin, being trained in a simpler and more natural fashion ; but in its general size and shape—qualities which are quite independent of changing modes—it resembles the moustache of the first folio more strongly than that of the fourth, and the moustache of the Halliwell-Phillips proof more strongly than any of the others.

With regard to the body of the portrait, a comparison of the engraving and the supposed original reveals equally striking evidence. As has already been shown (page 20), there are many indications in the engraving of very bad drawing ; and it has been suggested that the difference between the two sides of the costume is the result of false perspective. Let us now suppose that Shakespeare's jerkin was the same on both sides—that is to say, that it was of the well-known type of the time—and, furthermore, that it was represented from much

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the same angle as the face—that is to say, that it was slightly foreshortened. The embroidery around the portrait's left shoulder would then show much the same curve as in the engraving. That around the other shoulder would be foreshortened into a line. This line could not be so long and so slant as to converge with the row of buttons in the front. To make it so, as is evident in the engraving, is to cut away the chest, and to leave the opening for the arm monstrously large. Clearly, in order to represent the Elizabethan jerkin in perspective, this line in the engraving should have been shorter, and its direction should have been more nearly parallel to the side of the cut. If it were so rendered the chest and right arm would fall into drawing; and the result of thus correcting the perspective would be to make the body seem amply large for the head.

Is it possible, supposing for the moment that Droeshout copied the Ely Palace portrait, or another similar to it, that he departed so far from the drawing of the costume? Even the best engravers of the time are known to have taken liberties in such respects,* and, as we

* Marshall's copy of the Droeshout engraving (1640) has a jerkin of a very different and much more life-like model, with a cloak thrown over the right shoulder. In later times Sherwin's "copy" of the Droeshout engraving renders the jerkin in a

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have seen, Droeshout was a bungling craftsman. It is altogether likely, moreover, that he did his work under circumstances of unusual difficulty. The loss of Shakespeare's manuscripts is generally attributed to the burning of the Globe Theatre in 1612, and if Shakespeare's fellow-actors possessed his painted portrait, they must have lost it at the same time. In the lack of a portrait of their own, Heminge and Condell would have had recourse to the library of some gentleman—for example, the Earl of Southampton. Droeshout would then no doubt have found it necessary to make a sketch of a portrait in the library, perhaps without taking the original from the wall, and would possibly have been limited as to the time in which he made his sketch. Judging by the difficulties encountered in securing the present engraving of the Ely Palace portrait, this conjecture as to his difficulties is very neutrally coloured. The greater part of his time he would have spent in copying the point of chief importance—namely, the features. As

different though not more life-like manner. One of the pretended engravings of the bust (in an extra illustrated copy of Boaden in the Lenox Library, New York) not only alters the costume, but covers the head with curly hair and the face with a drooping moustache and a beard, giving the whole something of the appearance of the Chandos portrait.

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to the body, it must have seemed enough merely to indicate the general lines. In filling out the details of the costume later, in his own rooms, he might easily have erred with regard to the foreshortening of the line of embroidery around the right shoulder. Even the radically false drawing we find in the costume would have been regarded as a matter of minor import, as is evident in the fact that, in spite of all that has been written about Droeshout's engraving, it has never hitherto been commented upon.

The case of a painter working from the life, however, is radically different. So gross an error would have been impossible. If the Droeshout painting were the original of the engraving, and painted from life, we should expect it to show the correct drawing of the costume. In point of fact, it exaggerates the defects. As the authorities at Stratford describe it, "the head appears to be life-size, but the body is drawn on a slightly smaller scale—a fact which, as was demonstrated by Mr. W. W. Oules, R.A., gives the face an appearance of heroic dimensions." In plain words, all the faulty drawing of the engraving is repeated, and is, in fact, exaggerated. The chest is even narrower, and the right shoulder droops. The evidence of

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the body thus confirms that of the moustache. That the man who painted the so-called Droeshout original knew not a little about drawing is evident in the fact that the features show far more refinement of modelling than in the engraving. If he had understood Elizabethan costume, there is every reason to suppose that he could have corrected the drawing of the jerkin. His abominable misrepresentation of the body is most easily explained on the supposition that he worked from the ill-drawn engraving of Droeshout, not in the early seventeenth century, but at a time when Elizabethan costume was obsolete.

The Ely Palace portrait tells a very different tale. A close scrutiny, as has been pointed out (page 85), shows that the costume is, in general, so drawn as to represent the normal modelling of the human body. The row of buttons, instead of being rectilinear, as in the Droeshout "Original" and engraving, shows the necessary curve. On the left side there are two salient lines instead of one, a semi-circle about the arm, and a diagonal running in a slightly upward curve from the shoulder toward the point where the row of buttons meets the waist. On the right side this diagonal, in accordance with the laws of perspective, has a slightly downward curve, while the embroidery

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round the arm is indistinct, being merged, in the foreshortening, with the diagonal, or hidden behind the outward curve of the chest. The shoulders accordingly appear amply large. The jerkin as a whole belongs to a type recorded in all the books of costume, and is so drawn as to give evidence of a solid, well-knit body behind it. If we suppose that Droeshout worked from such an original as this, the defects of his drawing are thoroughly explainable ; in hastily sketching the costume it would have been very easy to confuse the diagonal on the portrait's right with the shorter line of the embroidery around the right armhole. To correct the mistake when transferring his sketch to the copper was probably an achievement beyond his power and beyond his ambition—indeed, beyond the ambition of most of the engravers of the time. If he repeated such an error of his sketch, the result would be that the opening for the arm would extend from the shoulder well down toward the waist, and the arm would be given abnormal dimensions, precisely as in the engraving. Having made this initial mistake, it would be necessary, if any show of symmetry were to be preserved, to ignore altogether the diagonal on the left side of the portrait.

The wing on the right shoulder of the Ely Palace portrait, as has been pointed out

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(page 53), does not sufficiently vanish, being impossibly turned toward the spectator. The result of this is that, judging by the top line of the shoulder alone, the left side of the body would seem to be viewed from the front. It was probably as a result of some such fault as this in his original that the careless Droeshout succeeded in turning the entire left side of the body impossibly toward the spectator.

It seems necessary to conclude that in the original of the engraving both the moustache and the costume resembled those features in the Ely Palace portrait more nearly than in the Droeshout painting.

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VIII.—The
Life Portrait
of Shake-
speare.

It does not necessarily follow that the Ely Palace portrait is the original of the Droeshout engraving. Though in most particulars superior in drawing, it is in a few points—the eyes and the perspective of the right cheek—notably inferior. That Droeshout, while erring egregiously in the modelling of the features and in the drawing of the costume, might have corrected the faults in perspective, is, of course, possible, but not altogether likely. The slight difference in the point of view from which the faces of the two portraits are drawn might be due to accident or to carelessness on the part of the engraver; but here, again, we are not warranted in making assumptions. This much, however, I do regard as established. The Ely Palace portrait is not, as Mr. Lee states, so different from the engraving as “to raise doubts as to whether the person represented could have been intended for Shakespeare”; but, quite the contrary, it has, of all the painted portraits, except the spurious Droeshout “Original,” the strongest resemblance to the Droeshout engraving. Granting that the Droeshout engraving may not have been taken from the Ely Palace portrait, it must have been taken from a portrait that in all essential points of features and costume was

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identical with it. Of all the painted portraits, accordingly, the Ely Palace portrait has the strongest claim to be regarded as a life portrait.

As Mr. Lee admits, the Ely Palace portrait is "of high artistic value ; the features are of a far more attractive and intellectual cast than in either the Droeshout painting or engraving." This is not the least important fact in its favour. It gives the impression of representing a real person, a sentient human being. The general effect of the countenance is simple, robust, and wholesome. The eyes, in spite of the error in drawing, have a very distinct and interesting expression—a disquiet vacancy that often denotes a deeply troubled mind. The mouth is both sensuous and sensitive, and the seriousness of the lower part of the face indicates dignity, even elevation of character. What the features of Shakespeare would have revealed to the brush of Janssens, Mytens, or Van Dyck we shall never know ; but our conjectures may not prove altogether idle if we take Ben Jonson's hint, and turn from the picture to the book.

Before the presumable date of the Ely Palace portrait, according to conjectural but generally accepted chronology, Shakespeare had written his most buoyant and joyous comedies—*Much Ado* (1598), *As You Like It* (1599), and *Twelfth Night* (1600–1601),

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as well as the middle tragedies—*Julius Cæsar* (1601) and the first version of *Hamlet* (1602). In 1603 he wrote the dark, ironical comedy *Measure for Measure*, and was engaged on *Hamlet*. During the four succeeding years he completed the great tragedies—*Othello*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Anthony and Cleopatra*. Thus the series of the deepest tragedies treads upon the heels of the most buoyant comedies; and the year which divided the two is the year of the Ely Palacé portrait. This year critics have generally taken as marking some sudden change in the underlying mood of Shakespeare's mind. Professor Barrett Wendell in his "William Shakspeare: a Study in Elizabethan Literature," analyses the mood of the plays upon which Shakespeare was now entering as follows: "A profound, fatalistic sense of the impotence of man in the midst of his environment; . . . a sense of something in the relations between men and women . . . widely different from the ideal, romantic fascination expressed by the comedies, . . . the certainty that woman may be damningly evil;" and "finally, . . . traces of deep sympathy with such abnormal, overwrought states of mind as . . . might easily have lapsed into madness." All this the historical critics of Shakespeare are accustomed to illustrate by the

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sonnets. Upon these Shakespeare is usually supposed to have been engaged between 1597 or 1598 and 1605—that is, roughly speaking, until after he had written *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, and *Lear*. In the later of the two series of these sonnets the author represents himself as fatally in the toils of an unlovely, vicious woman, who not only seduces him from his true self, but embitters his relationship with his dearest friend. There is a distinct reference also to madness (Sonnet 129). This sombre period gave way to a later period of comedy—*The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* (1610–11). The various assumptions that go to make up this account of Shakespeare's life have, it must be clearly stated, no real scientific foundation. The chronology, for instance, is far from certain ; it has been questioned, moreover, whether the sonnets record a personal experience. And the authenticity of the portrait, as we have seen, is not beyond question. Yet the theory as to Shakespeare's spiritual development has exerted a profound influence over the imaginations of most scholars. If now the Ely Palace portrait may be taken as authentic, it distinctly confirms the theory. The expression of the disquiet, indwelling eyes, and the dignified, serious face, is what one would naturally expect at the period of *Hamlet*.

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